THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI KANTI LAL BHURIA): (a) and (b) Yes, Sir. The Government of India has drawn a special three years plan for increasing the production and productivity of wheat in 138 identified districts. Under the plan, provision has been made to provide assistance for seed distribution, demonstration, micro-nutrients, improved farm implements and subsidy for diesel.

(c) and (d) 48,000 quintal of quality seeds of improved variety of wheat has been allocated to different wheat producing States to conduct field demonstrations, out of which 43,750 quintal seed has been supplied to the targeted States. It is too early to assess the impact of this initiative as the sowing of the crop has just started.

NCF Recommendations

†255. SHRI MANGANI LAL MANDAL: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the National Commission on Farmers has submitted its final report to the Government;

(b) whether it is also a fact that the Commission has even recommended necessary constitutional amendments in the interest of agriculture and the farmers;

(c) whether the Swaminathan Commission has highlighted the continuously declining trend of capital investment in agricultural sector since Sixth Five Year Plan as one of the salient reasons for decline in agricultural production; and

(d) if so, the details thereof in the light of above points and the effective steps Government propose to take in this direction?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI KANTI LAL BHURIA): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) The Commission has recommended the inclusion of agriculture in the Concurrent List of the Seventh Schedule of the Constitution.

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi

(c) and (d) The Commission has, *inter-alia*, referred to a drop in public and private investment in Agriculture Sector. It is the constant endeavour of the Government to increase the allocation to agriculture sector and promote private investment in the sector. The State Governments have also been requested to suitably enhance allocation of the farm sector.

Per-acre yield of rice

256. SHRI S.S. AHLUWALIA: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Indian ranks second in terms of the volume of the rice produced but ranks sixteenth in terms of yield of the crop per-acre;

(b) the reasons for low yield of the crop per-acre; and

(c) the details of steps being contemplated, if any, to improve the scenario indicating the time-frame thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI KANTI LAL BHURIA): (a) As per statistics on production and yield on the website of Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) for the year 2004 (corresponding to agriculture year 2003-04 in case of India), India ranks 2nd in terms of the rice produced and ranks 14th in terms of yield per hectare.

(b) The main reasons for low yield per hectare of the crop, among others, are predominant rainfed conditions, low seed replacement ration and short maturity periods.

(c) In order to increase production and productivity, the Central Government has been implementing Integrated Cereals Development Programme (ICDP) in Rice Based Cropping Systems Areas. The scheme is implemented on 90:10 sharing basis between Government of India (GoI) and the States. Under the scheme, assistance is provided for propagation of improved production technology, hybrid rice production technology, integrated pest management through field demonstrations; training of farmers including women; transfer of technology through electronic media and published literature; farm implements; installation of sprinkler irrigation system; varietal replacement and production of certified seeds. Frontline